

Application No. 10/737,355

**Amendments to the Claims:**

**Listing of Claims:**

1. (Original) A drip plate for use in a phase change ink jet printer using solid ink, comprising:  
an upper portion; and  
a lower pointed portion,  
wherein the lower portion is not coplanar with the upper portion.
2. (Original) The drip plate of claim 1, wherein a heating element is bonded to a first side of the upper portion.
3. (Original) The drip plate of claim 2, wherein the heating element is a closed loop heater.
4. (Original) The drip plate of claim 3, wherein the heating element includes a foil heater encapsulated in a thin electrically insulative film.
5. (Original) The drip plate of claim 1, further comprising a bent flange extending upward from the upper side of the drip plate.
6. (Original) The drip plate of claim 1, wherein the drip plate is made from metal.
7. (Original) The drip plate of claim 6, wherein the drip plate is made from a nonferrous metal.
8. (Original) The drip plate of claim 7, wherein the drip plate is made from aluminum

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9. (Original) The drip plate of claim 1, wherein the drip plate is made from plastic

10. (Original) The drip plate of claim 9, where the drip plate is injection molded.

11. (Original) The plate of claim 10, wherein a heating element is molded into the drip plate.

12. (Original) The drip plate of claim 1, further comprising at least one anchor tab extending from the second side of the drip plate located near the center of the plate.

13. (Original) The drip plate of claim 12, wherein the anchor tabs are arranged in pairs and wherein each pair is arranged substantially symmetrically about a vertical center line.

14. (Original) The drip plate of claim 1, further comprising a sliver strainer located near a lower edge of the drip plate.

15. (Original) An ink loader comprising the drip plate of claim 1.

16. (Original) An ink loader for a phase change ink printer, comprising:

at least one channel having an entry end and an exit end; and

a melt assembly, which includes

a drip plate including

an upper portion having substantially flat upper first and second sides, and  
a lower pointed portion having substantially flat lower first and second sides,  
wherein the lower portion is not coplanar with the upper portion;

a melt plate fastened to the upper second side of the drip plate; and

a heating device thermally connected to one of the melt plate and the drip plate.

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17. (Original) The ink loader of claim 16, further comprising an adapter to position the assembly relative to the at least one channel.

18. (Original) The ink loader of claim 16, wherein at least one of the drip plate and the melt plate is made from a nonferrous metal.

19. (Original) The ink loader of claim 18, wherein at least one of the drip plate and the melt plate is made from aluminum.

20. (Original) The ink loader of claim 16, wherein at least one of the drip plate and the melt plate is made from plastic

21. (Original) The ink loader of claim 20, wherein at least one of the drip plate and the melt plate is injection molded.

22. (Original) The ink loader of claim 16, wherein the heating element is bonded to the first side of the upper portion of the drip plate.

23. (Currently Amended) The drip-plate ink loader of claim 22, wherein the heating element is a closed loop heater.

24. (Currently Amended) The drip-plate ink loader of claim 23, wherein the heating element includes a foil heater encapsulated in a thin electrically insulative film.

25. (Original) The assembly of claim 16, wherein the melt plate has two large cutout portions.

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26. (Original) The ink loader of claim 16, wherein the melt plate includes at least one anchor tab extending from the second side of the drip plate.

27. (Original) The ink loader of claim 16, wherein the melt plate includes a sliver strainer located near a lower portion of the drip plate.